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VELASQUEZ

UNIFORM WITH THIS VOLUME

*BY THE SAME AUTHOR*

**R O M N E Y**

Containing sixteen examples  
of the master's work

**R E Y N O L D S**

Containing sixteen examples  
of the master's work

A. AND C. BLACK, 4 SOHO SQUARE, LONDON, W.





o. v. m. l.  
ap. 1712



PHILIP, OLD  
National Gallery, London



*Brown*

# VELASQUEZ

BY  
RANDALL DAVIES

CONTAINING SIXTEEN ILLUSTRATIONS  
IN COLOUR

LONDON  
ADAM AND CHARLES BLACK  
1914

UNIV. OF  
CALIFORNIA

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## PREFACE

IN the course of a career which lasted no less than forty years (dating it from 1620, when he attained his majority) Velasquez might easily have produced more than the hundred or so of authentic works that are at present attributed to him. Nevertheless, the tendency of modern criticism has been to diminish rather than to increase the list of his achievements, and the discovery of fresh examples is altogether disproportionate to the eagerness with which they are sought for. The familiar portrait of Alessandro del Borro, at Berlin, for example, which figured without comment in the catalogue appended to a volume on Velasquez published so recently as 1910, is now removed from the Spanish room at the Kaiser Friedrich Museum, and hung with contemporary Italian paintings, while among several pictures put forward as "discoveries" at the recent exhibition of Spanish Old Masters at the



Grafton galleries, only one (Mr. Otto Beit's *Kitchen-maid*) can be considered the work of the master himself.

The explanation of this exceptionally limited *œuvre* is simply—that it was exceptionally limited! Who, besides Velasquez, had a *clientèle* of but one person? From the time when he left his master's studio to enter the service of Philip IV. we shall find that all but a bare percentage of his work was commissioned by the King, and we need not doubt that the royal permission was obtained for any other, just as it had to be for his two journeys to Italy. The greatest wonder is that under such restraint he should have preserved wholly inviolate his artistic independence. Even if his choice of subject was restricted, his method of dealing with it was absolutely his own, and the obvious truth of all that he put on to canvas, if it is but the least of the qualities that have made him famous, is not the less remarkable. If one had to sum up his career and his art in a sentence it might be done by describing him as a Court painter who never flattered.

R. D.



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\* Formerly attributed to Velasquez.



## VELASQUEZ

## A SHORT ACCOUNT OF HIS WORK

ON the 6th of June 1599 was baptized in the Church of S. Peter at Seville, Diego, son of Juan Rodriguez de Silva and Geronima Velazquez his wife. Velasquez, as we call him, Diego de Silva Velazquez, as he signed himself, are but abbreviations of his full name, Diego Rodriguez de Silva y Velazquez.

His father was a native of Seville, but of Portuguese extraction. His mother was Spanish. In any other country but Spain they might have been considered as belonging to the upper classes ; but when, towards the close of the painter's life, the King conferred on him the honour of being made a Knight of Santiago, an elaborate inquisition, while allowing the purity of his lineage, found a fatal objection in the absence of its positive nobility, and nothing less than a Brief from the Pope was required to overcome this unfortunate obstacle. In our own country the grant of arms to William Shakespeare was open to still graver objections, but fortunately the Reformation had

## Velasquez

made it possible for the Heralds' College to accomplish the desired object without recourse to the Papal Chair.

From his earliest years the boy had an inclination towards painting, and at the age of thirteen his parents put him to study under the most considerable painter then in Spain, Francisco de Herrera. But after a few months they found the temper of the master so intolerable that they took their son away and placed him with a more sympathetic instructor, Francisco Pacheco. This was a most fortunate change, for whereas Herrera was deficient in character as well as in temper, Pacheco was a singularly charming man, and his house was the resort of the many literary and artistic people who at that time were to be found in Seville. His good influence on Velasquez extended far beyond the teaching of his art, for he appears to have brought him up as one of his own family, and within five years he bestowed on him the hand of his daughter Juana, "induced thereto," to quote Pacheco's own words, "by the rectitude of his conduct, the purity of his morals and his great talents, and from the high expectation I entertained of his natural abilities and transcendent genius."

It has been wittily said of Pacheco that his finest piece of work was his son-in-law, and it is certain



Vicent





that he was exceedingly proud of him. "As the honour of being his master is far greater than that of being his father-in-law," he continues, "it is perfectly justifiable to expose the audacity of those who have been desirous to arrogate to themselves this honour, thus depriving me of the glory of my declining years. I do not deem it any demerit to the master to be surpassed by the pupil."

From the very first Velasquez seems to have struck out a path for himself—the path of realism—and his master, so far from discouraging him, was more than content to foster and develop so far as he could the extraordinary talent which he recognized in his pupil. In "The Art of Painting," published in 1649, Pacheco tells us that Diego's first attempts were studies like the *Old Woman Frying Eggs*, belonging to Sir Frederick Cook, or the *Christ at the House of Martha*, in the National Gallery—*bodegones* as they were called in his language, being more or less studies of still-life. It was on the simple imitation of natural objects, and on portraiture, that his talents were exercised and developed. There was a peasant lad, Pacheco says, whom he used to sketch continually, in all sorts of poses, in charcoal heightened with white, a practice which helped him considerably in attaining truth in painting portraits.

None of these portrait studies are known to be in existence at the present time, but of the pictures painted before he left Seville in 1623 there are enough to show that Velasquez had profited by his exercises in realism to an extent which would have been impossible for any but an exceptionally gifted and exceptionally determined student. In them we can see the beginning of that extraordinary individuality and exemplary adherence to soundly formed principles which distinguish Velasquez from any other painter in the world, and which helped his wonderful genius to accomplish for his country a fame more lasting than the fading glories of pomp and policy.

In those days, it is important to remember, Spain was still a great nation, and her King, to whom Velasquez was to devote the whole of his patient and praiseworthy life, was a great personage. That the whole country was virtually on the verge of ruin, and that its greatness was shortly to crumble into dust, were considerations little affecting the circumstances of a court official; and in following the career of Velasquez as a painter who was exclusively in the service of Philip, we should have regard rather to the traditional state and grandeur of the Court than to the political affairs of the nation at large, or to the personal feebleness of the King himself.





ALESSANDRO DEL BORRO

Royal Museum, Berlin





Of the earliest work of Velasquez—executed, that is to say, before he left Seville for Madrid in 1623, when not yet twenty-five years of age—Senor Beruete enumerates ten existing examples of undoubted authenticity. Of doubtful pictures there are a good many more; but as the present writer, in common with mankind at large, is more indebted to Senor Beruete than to anyone else for a practical knowledge of the master's work as well as for a reasoned judgment of his genius, it would seem unnecessary to consider any but a very few of those pictures which Senor Beruete regards as doubtful. That he should question such popular favourites as the *Admiral Pulido Pareja* in the National Gallery, or the *Philip IV* at Dulwich, is certainly somewhat of a shock. The former was purchased from the famous collection of Lord Radnor at Longford Castle, and is still labelled by the Director of the National Gallery as an authentic work, though the *Dead Warrior* and the *Marriage Ceremony* are now only described as "attributed." The latter, which was presented to the nation by Lord Savile, is supposed by Senor Beruete to be a pastiche by Luca Giordano (who came to Spain in 1692), the head of the "show-man" in the foreground being a portrait of himself. The Dulwich picture was perhaps more questionable,



and the recent discovery of the original has proved beyond doubt that it is a picture which lacks the qualities to be looked for in an original work from the hand of the master. Whether Senor Beruete has been unduly exclusive or not, the fact remains that whereas Mr. R. A. M. Stevenson enumerates over two hundred and fifty pictures in a catalogue of "The Works of Velasquez and of Certain Works attributed to the Artist," Senor Beruete only allows eighty-three as really genuine.

When we remember that Sir Joshua Reynolds painted nearly twice as many pictures in a single year—a number almost equalled by George Romney in the same time—this list of eighty-three seems ridiculously small for the lifework of an artist who was, after all, primarily a portrait painter. Happily, however, Velasquez was not dependent on the public for his subsistence.

Of the ten examples of his earliest work, no less than three are at present in London, and a fourth is at Richmond, Surrey. The first of these in Senor Beruete's list, possibly as being the earliest, is the *Christ in the House of Martha*, which is now in the National Gallery. Two are at Apsley House, belonging to the Duke of Wellington, namely, the *Two Boys* and the *Water Carrier of Seville*. The *Old Woman*

*Frying Eggs* is in the collection of Sir Frederick Cook, at Doughty House, Richmond.

Of these the *Water Carrier* is certainly the finest, and brings us much closer to the subsequent work of the painter than the *Two Boys* in the same collection. In the latter we have little more than a clever study, while the former has more the character of a portrait. The principal figure, that of the old water carrier, occupies more than half of the canvas, with his left hand resting on the enormous water-jar, and his right holding out a glass to a youth who receives it from him. A third figure at the back is only dimly perceptible, and were both the minor characters obliterated, the magnificent painting of the chief would alone give us earnest enough of what was to come when Velasquez had to undertake a portrait commanded by royalty. Its unaffected simplicity, its lifelike reality, to say nothing of the perfect mastery already acquired over the technical difficulties of painting, admit it without question into the category of great achievements.

In the *Old Woman Frying Eggs* we miss the dignity of the *Water Carrier*, but find as much charm and a little more vivacity. Instead of the stately figure of the man filling an upright canvas, we have here an old dame seated at a table, in an oblong

picture, her right hand extended over a cooking-stove upon which is an earthen dish of eggs in the process of frying, and her left hand holding an egg unbroken. Beyond, on our left, is the familiar boy, holding out a flask of wine in his left hand, and clasping a pale yellow melon to his side with his right.

The whole background is so dark that one can hardly distinguish the outline of the boy's body against it, and we can but dimly discern a wicker basket hanging upon the wall at the back. Only on our extreme right does a little grey light fall upon the wall so as to show us a couple of pairs of iron lamps hung upon it.

Upon the table are a pestle and mortar, an onion, a couple of jars, and a white dish with a knife laid across it, the shadow of which falls sharply into the dish. The old woman's dress is of a reddish brown, and she has a large white scarf or handkerchief over her head and shoulders. Her face is in profile, the mouth slightly open as though she were about to address the boy. The light, as usual, falls from high up on our left.

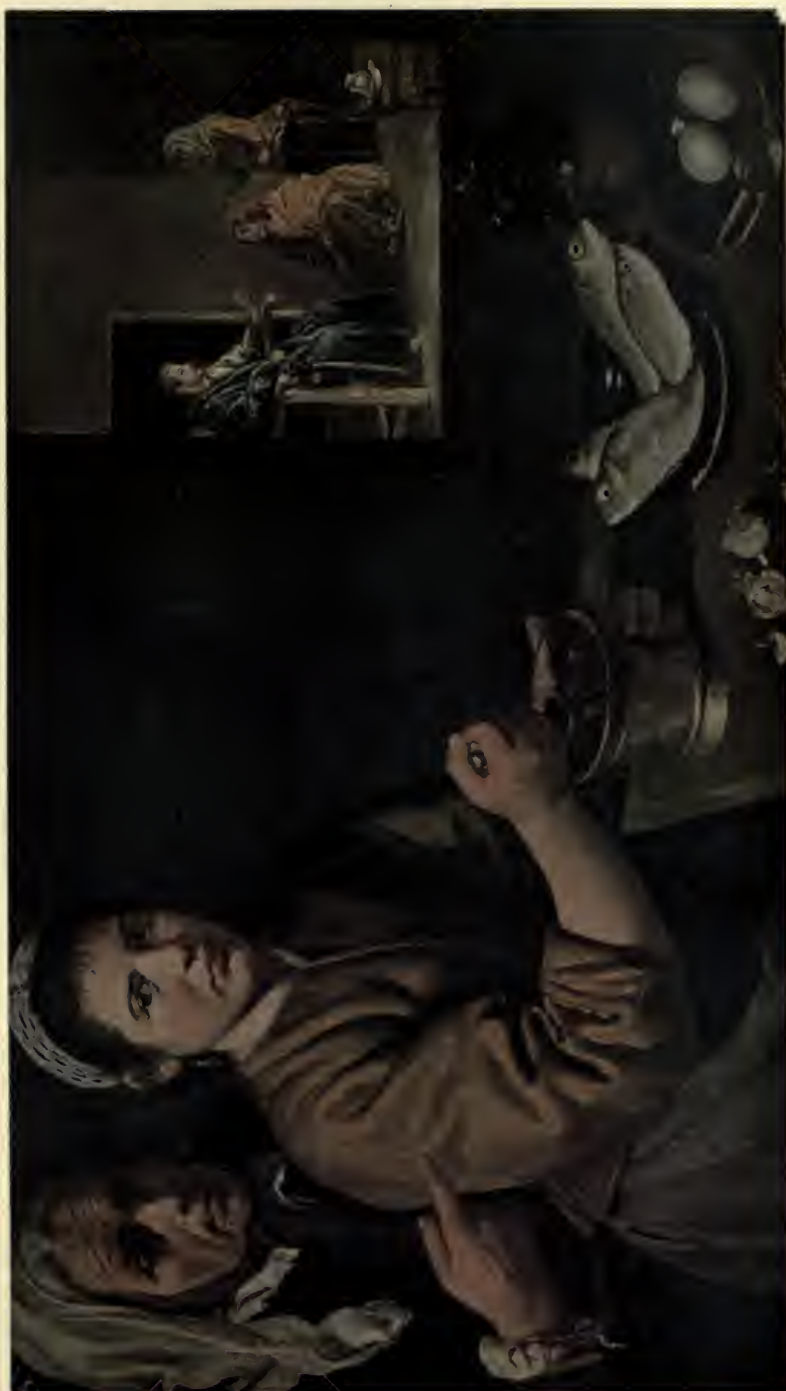
Nothing could be simpler than the elements of the composition, and there is no apparent attempt at making a picture out of them. It is what we might have expected to see upon looking through the key-





CHRIST AT THE HOUSE OF MARTHA

National Gallery, London





hole of the kitchen door at any odd moment when we happened to be passing. And yet it is in this very simplicity that we shall find, throughout the whole course of the painter's career, the secret of his extraordinary power. Realizing, as it seems, his wonderful gifts—for seeing things as they were, and for painting them as he saw them—he seldom if ever put on canvas anything which was not actually before him.

In the *Christ at the House of Martha* we have a composition very similar to that of the *Old Woman*, but with an addition which takes us a long step farther in his development. I mean the opening in the back wall through which we see the group of Christ and Mary and Martha in another room lighted from the opposite side. Here we have a foretaste of one of the most striking features in the great achievements of his latest period, *Las Hilanderas* and *Las Meninas*, in both of which the eye is carried beyond the back wall of the room containing the principal figures.

The elaborate realism of the Dutch painters of still-life or interiors has absolutely nothing in common with this perfect simplicity of Velasquez. To get their effects they had to heap the tables with fish and fruit, or crowd the room with people who must all be doing something in particular. Velasquez seems to have just dropped in and painted whatever was going on,



as though with the feeling that he could paint so well that it didn't matter what there was or was not there to paint. He could see things, and he could paint them—*voilà tout !*

In 1621 the old King Philip III died, and his son Philip IV ascended the throne. One of his first acts was to dismiss the all-powerful Duke of Lerma, and take into his confidence the Count-Duke Olivarez, whose father was the Governor of the Alcazar at Seville. Olivarez was one of the frequenters of Pacheco's house, and he lost little time in inviting Velasquez to come and try his fortunes in Madrid. For some reason or other his first visit, in 1622, was unsuccessful, and he soon returned to Seville. In the early part of the next year, however, he again set out for the capital, Olivarez having summoned him to the palace to paint his Majesty's portrait. This time Pacheco thought it incumbent on himself to accompany his pupil, and the two arrived in Madrid about the middle of March, a few days after an equally interesting visitor in our eyes, namely Prince Charles.

For the full story of the mad adventure undertaken by the Duke of Buckingham and the Prince, in defiance of all convention, we must turn to Professor

Gardner's *Spanish Marriage*, but a word or two about it can hardly be considered out of place in these pages when we realize that if it had been carried to a successful issue, and Charles had married the Spanish Princess, we should in all probability have been enriched with a series of royal portraits from the hand of Velasquez that would have been of even greater interest to us than those of Philip IV. In addition to the pictures of Charles in his later years by Vandyck, we should certainly have more than one of him by Velasquez as Prince of Wales, and though it is unlikely that he would ever have succeeded in taking Velasquez away from Philip, even for a few months, it would have been quite within the bounds of possibility for him to have done so, especially when backed by so keen a lover of the fine arts as Buckingham.

As it was, Velasquez is only known to have painted one picture of the young Prince, and that merely an unfinished sketch. This is not known to be in existence, but there is still the bare chance that it may in one of these curious days be brought to light. Many attempts have been made to find it—the Director of the National Portrait Gallery laughingly tells me that it is brought to him about once a week—and in 1847 a provincial bookseller named Snare

THE LADY WITH A FAN

Wallace Collection, London







But to return to actualities. It was not Prince Charles whom Velasquez went to Madrid to paint, but King Philip. This was not to be done without some preliminary exercise, and one of the Court officials, by name Fonseca, was chosen to be, as it were, the *corpus vile* on which to make the *experimentum*.

The effect produced by the portrait of Fonseca hastened the bestowal of Philip's favour. It was so much admired that no one talked of anything else, and Philip on seeing it immediately ordered Velasquez to paint his portrait. Unfortunately this diploma work, as we may call it, is no longer in existence. Like the sketch of Prince Charles, it has disappeared, and we have no work of the artist after his arrival at Madrid until his first portrait of the King, which he painted at the end of August. Even as to this there is some doubt, as Palomino asserts that the first portrait of the King was the famous equestrian picture which is supposed to have perished when the palace was burnt down in 1734. However that may be, the two earliest portraits of Philip at present in existence, and presumably painted in the year 1623, are those now numbered 1182 and 1183 (formerly 1070 and 1071) in the Prado Gallery. The former is the magnificent full length of the young King, then but twenty-

eight years of age, dressed in black, standing in front of a table, holding a letter in his right hand. The latter is the head of the same portrait, presumably done as a study or trial for the former.

To this period Senor Beruete ascribes the *Geographer*, in the Rouen Gallery, which was formerly called a portrait of Christopher Columbus and attributed to Joseph Ribera. But this must have been merely by-play. The King was so delighted with his new painter that he immediately took him into his service at the magnificent salary of twenty ducats a month, which was twenty-five per cent. more than that of his predecessor Gonzalez, who had received but sixteen ducats a month. More than this, Philip ordered all the existing portraits of himself to be removed from the palace, and gave out that nobody but Velasquez should thenceforth be allowed the privilege of reproducing his features. Within two years he gave a further testimony of his royal favour and generosity in the shape of a present of 300 ducats and a lodging allowance estimated at about 200 ducats a year.

In the early part of the year 1627 Velasquez was appointed a gentleman of the bedchamber, an honour which followed on his being awarded the prize for the historical picture the *Expulsion of the Moors*. This



## The Expulsion of the Moors 15

miserable episode was chosen as the subject for a competition between Velasquez and his three contemporaries, Carducho, Caxes, and Nardi, who had asserted that Velasquez did not know how to paint anything but heads. To this Velasquez had calmly replied that they did him a great honour in saying so, for in his opinion nobody knew how to paint them. It was thereupon decided that all four should paint an historical piece, and that Gianbattista Crescenzo, a painter and architect of Italian extraction, and Juan Bautista Mayno, a well-known artist and formerly a pupil of El Greco, should be the judges of which was the best. Velasquez was adjudged the victor, but his picture is no longer in existence, having probably been destroyed by the fire in 1734.

Besides the two portraits of the King already mentioned, there is that of his brother Carlos, which was painted not very long after and is perhaps finer than anything accomplished during this period. It is a full-length figure of the Prince standing against a grey background which is devoid of any sort of ornament or adjunct whatsoever. Save for the light which falls from high up on our left, casting a deep shadow on the floor, there is nothing but the figure for the eye to rest upon—it might be standing in a cupboard. The effect is wonderful. There is Carlos

facing us, his eyes directed towards our feet, conscious that he is being painted, and not altogether unwilling, though perhaps a little shy of holding his glove and his hat for so long in that particular fashion. But there he is, and he must not move. If he were to turn his head ever so little the light would miss the left-hand point of his linen collar and the band on his glove. The essentials of a fine picture are generally simple.

In the summer of 1628 there was another illustrious personage in Madrid who, like Prince Charles, might very well have effected a decisive change in the career of Velasquez, though not precisely in the same fashion. For this time it was not a patron, but a painter, namely Rubens ; though, to be sure, it was not as a painter that he visited Madrid, but as the representative of King Charles, charged with a diplomatic commission concerning the conclusion of peace between England and Spain. But though he came as an ambassador, he brought with him no less than eight pictures, and during the nine months he remained painted a great many more. Pacheco gives a long list of these, which includes five portraits of the King, besides numerous portraits of people about the Court, and copies of the principal pictures of Titian which were in the palace.





INFANTA MARIA THERESA

Imperial Gallery, Vienna





Velasquez was charged by Philip to entertain Rubens, and show him all the treasures which the palace contained. Rubens was then over fifty years old, his reputation as a person of importance was hardly less than that of his art, and if Velasquez, who was then barely thirty years old, had been capable of being influenced by anyone it would surely have been by Rubens. But what do we find? Certainly nothing in his work that would suggest the remotest connection with the Flemish painter ; but for the knowledge of the fact that Rubens actually was in Madrid, and closely associated with Velasquez, one might naturally assume that the two had never met, and that Rubens was the last person in the world whose works could have had any influence on the painter of Philip IV and his dwarfs, or of subjects like *Las Meninas* and *Las Hilanderas*.

There is more than this, however, to show that Velasquez was utterly insensible to the influence of Rubens. The last picture of this period, which was painted in the year 1629, may almost be taken as a challenge to Rubens. I mean *The Toppers*, or as it was then called *Bacchus*. For this picture the King allowed Velasquez 100 ducats ; the document containing this item was signed in July 1629, but it is probable that the picture was painted some months



earlier, as Velasquez had started on his journey to Italy in the spring. So that we have here a deliberate choice of one of Rubens's own subjects, painted at the very time he was in Madrid, or at most a month or two after his departure.

If we had *The Topers* hanging side by side with the *Silenus* at the National Gallery we should see how entirely independent of any Flemish influence Velasquez proved himself to be. The realism of Rubens extends no further than the marvellous rendering of human flesh : the characters are not real, they are embodiments of the Pagan idea which underlies the subject—the realism of Velasquez is real realism. The god is present, but he is obviously a human being, and as for the Topers, they are simply life-like portraits of beggars and loafers. It is quite right to call the picture after them, and not after Bacchus. There is nothing Pagan about the composition ; it is simply a group of real life.

With this picture we take leave of the first period of Velasquez's career. We now follow him on his first journey to Italy, and see how little, if at all, he was influenced by what he found there.

His first stay in Italy was at Venice, where he made copies of Tintoretto's *Last Supper* and





THE TOPER'S

The Prado, Madrid





*Crucifixion.* Neither of these copies is now extant. From Venice he went to Ferrara, and thence to Rome, where he was offered a lodging in the Vatican, but preferred to take up quarters at the Villa Medici, where he made the two sketches of the gardens which are now in the Prado Gallery.

More important, however, were two pictures which he painted in Rome and gave to Philip on his return to Spain, namely, *The Forge of Vulcan* and *Joseph's Coat*. The former, which is at the Prado, is naturally comparable with the *Bacchus*. Again we have a mythological subject and again we find that only a single figure is treated with some semblance of Pagan attributes, while the rest are the most realistic presentments of the lower order of men in their actual every-day conditions. As it is, a laurel wreath, a loose robe and a radiant halo of light only thinly disguise the mortality of the young Apollo, who recites the story of the infidelities of Venus to a Vulcan who is in no way distinguishable from the three nearly nude assistants, who are working with him at the anvil. There is even less of the atmosphere of Paganism in this picture than in the other, which was painted in the open air. Here the scene is a forge, and but for the figure of Apollo may be taken for as realistic and



simple a presentment of actuality as has ever been committed to canvas.

*Joseph's Coat* is a little more artificial in composition, though the figures themselves are almost as realistic as those in the forge, and one or two of them appear to have been painted from the same models. The black and white squares of the paving of the hall in which the scene is laid impart a more formal air to the picture than the homely interior of the forge. A noticeable feature about it is that the light falls from the right-hand side. This is the first example in which the light does not come from high up on the left—if we except the view of the inner chamber in the picture of *Christ in the House of Martha*—and all through his career Velasquez appears to have preferred this arrangement, unless as it seems there were special circumstances to be considered, as in the equestrian portrait of Philip, which faces to the right, or in *Las Meninas*, where the light is necessarily reversed.

Returning to Spain by Naples, he was commanded to paint a portrait of Philip's sister, the Infanta Donna Maria, who was about to be married to Ferdinand, King of Hungary. Apparently the time at his disposal was very short, as he only accomplished a head of the Princess, which



is now in the Prado Gallery, No. 1187—formerly 1072.

It was probably on or soon after his return from Italy in 1631 that Velasquez painted the full-length portrait of Philip, which is now in the National Gallery. This is at present hung so as to invite comparison with the *Admiral Pulido Pareja*, only *The Boar Hunt* being between them. Like the Admiral, this Philip has been assailed with doubt, Sir William Armstrong inclining to think that it is the work of Mazo, the son-in-law of Velasquez, about whom we heard so much in connection with the *Venus at the Mirror* at the time when that masterpiece was purchased for the nation. Señor Beruete, however, is quite reassuring as to the authenticity of the Philip, and asserts that there is not a single touch upon it that is not from the brush of Velasquez. For purposes of contrast it would be interesting to replace the Admiral, temporarily, with the portrait of King Charles painted by Daniel Mytens in the same year, 1631, which is now in the National Portrait Gallery. We could then see how to measure our regret at the failure of the Spanish marriage negotiations. At the same time it is worth noticing, if anyone will have the condescension to regard the work of Mytens as worthy of critical consideration,

that the painting of the dress and the pose of the figure in the picture of Charles exhibit a great many excellences, though they are unhappily overpowered by the glare of the crimson background, and which suffer also from the weakness of the painting of the head. In the portrait of Philip it is the head which compels attention, much as the eye may be tempted to dally with the sparkling allurements of the costume, while the background is simple in the extreme. The contrast between the two pictures serves to show at a glance the difference between what is essential to true portraiture and what is merely accessory.

The wonderful drawing of the head of Philip in this picture is the more noticeable when it is compared with the much later head in the same room at the National Gallery. An interval of over twenty years has elapsed, but there, unmistakably, is the same face, and the differences only accentuate the truth which we see stamped on both canvases.

In the following year, 1632, were painted the half-lengths of the King and Queen Isabella, which are now in the Vienna Gallery, and a full-length of Don Diego del Corral in the collection of the Duchess of Villahermosa, at Madrid.

To this period also may be assigned the *Christ at*



CHRIST AT THE COLUM

National Gallery, London









*the Column* in the National Gallery. Some years later, probably in 1639, was painted the wonderful *Crucifixion* which is now in the Prado Gallery. That the latter should be so enthusiastically praised while the former attracts but little attention is natural enough, but is due to other reasons than the real merits of the two pictures. Both are masterpieces. But while the subject of the one has been rendered familiar to us by countless representations—all of which it is not too much to say it utterly eclipses—that of the other is treated in so naturalistic and at the same time so original a manner as to make an entirely different appeal to our emotions. The one we gaze upon with reverence, the other with pity. But while easily recognizing the conventional, we are apt to overlook the less obvious, but equally significant, beauty of the less familiar representation ; its realism is repellent only because it is new to us ; not, if we reflect for a moment, because it is more fearful than that of a crucifixion. Nothing could be more tender than the attitude of the child, more reverent than that of the angel ; and it needs but the effort of freeing the mind from the conventional ideas imposed by long custom, to recognize in this simple group as beautiful an expression of the painter's religious feeling as it is of his technical skill.

Two portraits of noblemen belong to this period which are somewhat out of the usual course of the painter's progress. One is that of François d'Este, Duke of Modena, which was painted, presumably, when he visited Madrid in 1638. It is now in the gallery at Modena, having been purchased in 1843 as a Vandyck. It is a short half-length of the Duke, in armour, bareheaded.

The other is rather more important, being a three-quarter length, in armour, of Don Antonio Alonzo Pimentel, Count of Bonavente. This is in the Prado Gallery, now numbered 1193. It is especially interesting as showing an inclination on the part of Velasquez at this time to imitate the work of Domenico Theotocopouli, generally known as El Greco, who settled in Toledo in 1575 and painted there till his death in 1614.

But more important among the pictures of his middle period—as we may call the eighteen years that elapsed between his first and second visits to Italy—is the famous *Surrender of Breda*, or as it is sometimes called *The Lances*. It will be remembered that an “heroic” subject had already been painted by Velasquez, in competition with his detractors, namely, *The Expulsion of the Moors*. Fortunately there was still one bright spot, however insignificant, upon the







rusty armour of Spain, and Spinola deserved to be congratulated upon the capitulation of Breda if only for the immense efforts he had made to compass it. At any rate it was a success which did not ruin the whole country as did the expulsion of the most useful and industrious portion of the community, and in the existence of *The Lances* we are doubly compensated for the loss of the earlier picture.

Had Velasquez been habitually employed in composing pictures on anything like this scale, *The Lances* would still strike us as a remarkable achievement; but when we recall how few and how comparatively small were the groups of figures he had hitherto painted, and the impression they all convey of having been taken from actual life, the triumphant success of this great picture seems little short of a marvel. The forest of lances that is such a distinguishing feature of the composition was doubtless painted from real life, and models were not wanting at the requisition of the King's painter. But the conception, arrangement, and realization of the occasion on such a scale as this show us that if Velasquez refused to follow the lead of Rubens, or the example of Tintoretto and Paul Veronese, it was not from any lack of capability.



We may mention here the several portraits of Prince Balthasar Carlos, the King's eldest son by his first Queen, Isabella, who was born on October 17, 1629. The earliest of these is at Castle Howard, in the collection of the Earl of Carlisle, which was formerly supposed to be a portrait of the Prince of Parma by Correggio. It is now generally acknowledged to be the work of Velasquez, and to represent Prince Balthasar Carlos at the age of about two years. The child is standing, or perhaps running after a dwarf, who stands in the foreground.

The next in point of date is the equestrian portrait at the Prado, representing the young Prince cantering along on the fattest of ponies, which Señor Beruete characterizes as the triumph of the grace and angelic charm of infancy as opposed to the apotheosis of pride displayed in the somewhat similar picture of the Duke Olivares. The pony, it must be admitted, can hardly be included in this characterization if judged by the present-day standard of what children's ponies usually look like; but it must be remembered that nothing less than what we should now call a shire horse would have been fit to carry a man in full armour, and we need not suppose the painter to have been guilty of overmuch exaggeration if the ponies were proportionately heavy. Again, this



PRINCE BALTHASAR CARLOS

The Prado, Madrid







is the only occasion on which Velasquez undertook the task of rendering an animal in motion, so that for once he was debarred from drawing on the canvas what he actually had standing before him. To make a standing war-horse curvet or rear as in the equestrian portraits of Philip and Olivares was one of the ordinary exercises of horsemanship, that could be repeated at short enough intervals for the painter to familiarize himself with the pose; but the Prince's pony is clearly in motion, and that was a very different matter.

This and the hunting portrait which we are coming to presently must have been painted when the Prince was six or seven years old.

At the age of eleven or twelve we see him, again in the Vienna Gallery, standing full face to us with his right hand resting on the back of a chair. He is sumptuously dressed in a suit of black velvet, and a broad black hat is on a table behind him. This was the last time Velasquez painted him.

There is a full-length of him at the age of about fourteen, now numbered 1221 in the Prado Catalogue, which was attributed to Velasquez, but is now considered to be the work of Mazo. The picture

of the Prince standing under a tree, holding a gun by the barrel, with a huge mastiff lying beside him, was one of three portraits—the others being of his father and his uncle Ferdinand—done for the royal hunting-lodge at Torre de la Parada.

Of these three hunting portraits it is difficult to choose which to admire most. One might, perhaps, say that that of Philip is the grandest, that of Ferdinand the most attractive, but that of Balthasar Carlos the most charming. The pose of Philip is really majestic, and apart from the difference between the ages of the two brothers, a difference which perhaps both their circumstances and the artist have emphasized, one would not hesitate to say which of the two was King. Ferdinand, indeed, is a little over finicking and smart, and his weak face does not add grandeur to the composition. Balthasar, on the other hand, for all his extreme youth, has much more of the royal stuff in him—his mother was a daughter of Henry IV and Marie de Medici—and one may regret as much for art as for his country that he did not live to prove it.

As for the great dogs, besides forming no inconsiderable part in these compositions, they are delightfully typical of their respective masters. That of the King is relegated to the darkest corner of the foreground, sitting on his haunches, facing us, with

a becoming air of respect for his royal owner. That of Ferdinand, on the other hand, is full in the light, and being of a light colour he is much more in evidence. He too sits on his haunches, but in profile, facing his master, and his benignant and elegant expression aptly reflects the smooth face of the Prince. Balthasar's dog, making all allowance for the relative smallness of the child, gives a much more forcible impression of size and strength, and he is crouched with his head on the ground watching us with alert eyes, as though he were guardian of youthful royalty, as well as servant of the chase.

How little influence Rubens had on Velasquez is again seen in the rendering by the latter of *The Boar Hunt*, which is now hung between the Philip IV and the *Admiral Pulido Pareja* in the National Gallery, having been purchased from Lord Cowley, to whom it was given by Ferdinand VII, for £2200. Anything less reminiscent of a boar hunt by Rubens or Snyders it would be difficult to imagine. Velasquez was so thoroughly a realist that he never seems to have arrived at any facility in painting animals in motion or action, as we have noticed in the case of Prince Balthasar Carlos's pony. He had to paint something that he could actually see the whole time he was painting it.



To return then to portraiture, when his model was always before him, and if not too exalted a rank, complaisant and patient in posing as long as was required. In the three-quarter length picture of the sculptor, Martinez Montanes, at the Prado, we have one of the finest examples. The exceptionally fine technique is perhaps due in some measure to the fact that the sitter was himself an artist, and might therefore be sympathetically indulgent to the painter in affording him every facility for studying his model. "The head," says Señor Beruete, "is prodigious in its truth, its colour and its modelling: and what a lesson in technique! The eyes, lightly touched with colour, are set deep in their sockets, and surrounded by a strongly marked forehead. The high lights are of a rich *impasto*, manipulated with marvellous skill, the greyer tones of the flesh, so true and so delicate, are laid in a manner that brings out with extraordinary truth, both the soft parts of the cheeks and the harder structure of the face under which one can follow the bones of the nose and forehead. . . . Everything in the picture is spontaneous. One can see that it is a pledge of friendship given by one artist to another; there is nothing here of that artificial arrangement that spoils commissioned portraits, even when they are the work of a painter as





ADMIRAL PULIDO PAREJA

National Gallery, London





independent as Velasquez was. One feels here the assurance of an artist who knows that his work will be understood by his friend in the spirit in which it was executed."

Certainly it is a picture peculiarly attractive to painters. It is little known by reproduction, and at the Prado itself probably attracts less attention from the ordinary visitor than the royal portraits. Mr. Stevenson calls it the best portrait of the middle period, and anticipates Señor Beruete's eulogies on the technique of the head. "One may note the bold certainty with which Velasquez establishes the form of the eye-socket and the planes of the nose and cheeks," he writes; "no lines are wanted to bring out the shapes; the painter's science of values is all-sufficient." M. Lefort is still more enthusiastic, on seeing it hanging surrounded with the masterpieces of other painters. "Ah! these redoubtable neighbours," he exclaims, "this canvas makes them look like mere imitations—dead conventional likenesses. Vandyke is dull, Rubens oily, Tintoret yellow; it is Velasquez alone who can give us the illusion of life in all its abundance!"

Two bust portraits of men, in black, may be mentioned here as being of about this period, but neither is comparable with the *Montanes* in execution,

and the authenticity of one of them has consequently been doubted, though Señor Beruete, who does not err on the side of credulity, admits it. This is the picture of an elderly gentleman with a pointed beard, which is in the Royal Gallery at Dresden. The other, in the gallery of the Duke of Wellington at Apsley House, is of a younger man, who has sometimes been thought to be Velasquez himself, but not with a very good show of probability. It is a much livelier portrait than that of the older man at Dresden ; but there is nothing in it which suggests the self-portrait. For what Velasquez really looked like—and we may even say felt like—we must go to Rome, where in the Capitol is the wonderfully charming self-portrait, which was probably painted in 1635. At the close of his life we see him again in *Las Meninas*, see him as the painter actually at work ; but in the earlier portrait we are face to face with the man himself.

In January 1649 Velasquez set out on his second journey to Italy, after an interval of over eighteen years had elapsed since his first. The occasion, or at least the excuse, was the King's project of founding a Royal Academy of Arts, for, as we have seen, there were no limits to his stupidity. Velasquez obtained leave, and funds, to go in search of works of art in Italy wherewith to adorn the newly built Alcazar, of



THE MAIDS OF HONOUR

The Prado, Madrid







which he was custodian. By one of those chances that sometimes colour the fierce light beating upon royalty, he took advantage of the escort of an embassy which was proceeding to Trent for the purpose of bringing back a second wife for Philip. Isabella, his first wife, and their charming son Balthasar Carlos were both dead, and in choosing a second consort neither sentiment nor the prohibited degrees could be allowed to weigh in the scale against the requirements of the Royal Family, and Philip took to wife the daughter of his sister—the sister whom Velasquez, it will be remembered, had painted at Naples—who had actually been betrothed to his poor little son, Balthasar Carlos.

Velasquez landed at Genoa, and proceeded by way of Milan and Padua, where he stayed some little time, to Venice. Here he purchased one or two pictures, notably the *Venus and Adonis* of Paul Veronese, and the *Purification of the Madianite Virgins*, and a sketch of the *Paradise* of Tintoretto, which are now in the Prado.

In Rome the Papal Jubilee was being celebrated, so that there were more people of note there than was usual—a coincidence which enabled Velasquez to meet Nicholas Poussin, as well as noted Italian painters like Salvator Rosa. With Bernini the



sculptor he may very possibly have conversed on the subject of King Charles's recent execution, as both of them had portrayed him.

But the chief event of this visit to Rome was the painting of the portrait of the Pope, Innocent X as he was styled. This picture is one of the great masterpieces of portraiture, and for certain qualities at any rate was never equalled by Velasquez himself. It is the first—and if we exclude horsemen and dwarfs the last—portrait in which the person is seated, and instead of the quiet grey and brown tones to which we are accustomed the picture is a radiant harmony of red and white.

Not the least wonderful thing about it is its extreme candour. How could anyone dare to tell the truth so plainly to anybody who was so fearfully ugly? And when we consider that the sitter was no less a personage than the Sovereign Pontiff of the Holy Church to whom the painter's royal master himself was but a subject, what are we to think? The answer is that, here again, as in *The Topers* or the *Christ at the Column*, to take but two examples, we have the strongest proof that no outside influence, no sentiment, no consideration of any sort in fact, could deviate the hand of Velasquez by a hair's-breadth from the course mapped out for it by his

not a shadow  
of a present

But doesn't describe  
Rennet's done

marvellous vision and his capacity for putting down on canvas what was actually before him. To say that he had no imagination would probably offend a great many of his admirers; but imagination as the term is understood in these days is apt to be rather a cheap quality, and often means little more than a shallow susceptibility to the circumstances of the case. There are powers of idealizing, too, like those of G. F. Watts, which may vary from very high to very low accomplishments in the production of a picture. But there are other qualities more rare; and one of these is the power, or shall we say the gift, of actually seeing more in the face of a sitter—to take portraiture as an example—than is apparent to the ordinary observer, not reading into it something that is not there, but just, as it were, rubbing away a sort of superficial patina of familiarity and revealing the actual face underneath it. How often do we find an every-day person delighted with a commonplace portrait of himself or one of his friends, while the work of some really accomplished painter is distasteful, and at first sight considered to be “no likeness.” The gift of seeing *into* things is comparatively rare in human beings; still rarer, is the ability in anyone thus gifted to record his vision on canvas.

Two paintings of the head are in existence, one of

which the Duke of Wellington has kindly permitted to be reproduced here, and the other is in the Hermitage Gallery at St. Petersburg. The latter appears to have been a study from the life, preliminary to painting the complete picture.

At Madrid, it will be remembered, Velasquez was made to try his hand on one of the Court officials before he was permitted to paint the King's portrait. In Rome there was no compulsion put upon him, but, as he had been travelling and had not been painting at all for some months, he seems to have thought it advisable to put himself in practice, as it were, before undertaking to portray his Holiness. Accordingly, before attempting even the head of the Pope, he executed a half-length picture of his servant and pupil, Juan da Pareja, by way of preparation for the great work, and this is now in the possession of the Earl of Radnor, at Longford Castle. A replica is also in the gallery of the Earl of Carlisle at Castle Howard. "One can easily see," says Señor Beruete, "in the *brio* and spontaneity of this portrait of Pareja that Velasquez, unembarrassed by convention or pre-occupation of any sort, and sure of his model, painted it *de verve*, and threw himself wholly into it."

Velasquez returned to Madrid in June 1651, being

### ERRATUM

THE PLATE "*INFANTA IN  
RED*" FACING PAGE 40 HAS  
BEEN SUBSTITUTED FOR  
THE HEAD OF *POPE INNO-  
CENT X* REFERRED TO ON  
PAGE 36.



## THE TAPESTRY WEAVERS

The Prado, Madrid







repeatedly pressed by Philip to curtail his sojourn in Italy. The next ten years of his life, which were the last, may be taken as his third period in dividing his career, there being no break in the continuity of his employment about the palace, nor any special event likely to have a bearing on the regular development of his art.

To this period may be ascribed twenty-six pictures, of which twelve are royal portraits, seven those of the buffoons, imps, dwarfs and idiots that, like Velasquez himself, were maintained at Court as part of the royal establishment ; three mythological and two sacred subjects. The two masterpieces, *Las Meninas* and *Las Hilanderas*, complete the catalogue.

The first of the royal portraits undertaken on his return was in all probability that of the new Queen, who, it will be remembered, was being fetched from Trent at the time when Velasquez went to Italy. She arrived in Madrid a good time before the painter was back, and Philip, impatient at the delay, commissioned Mazo to undertake the execution of her portrait.

The first sketch of her by Velasquez is the head which is now in the Louvre.\* This appears to have

\* No. 1735. Senor Beruete points out that this and the Vienna portrait are not, as is generally supposed, the Infanta Maria-Theresa.

been a preliminary study for the three-quarter length in the Imperial Gallery at Vienna. The Queen was then only about sixteen years old. A few years later were painted the two full-length pictures of her which are now in the Prado Gallery, Nos. 1191 and 1190 (formerly 1078 and 1079), A later one, No. 1222 (formerly 1082), is not considered as authentic.

As a consolation for the untimely death of the young Prince Balthasar Carlos, we are permitted to enjoy the portraits of the Infanta Margarita, by whose birth Philip's second marriage was blessed in the year 1651. It is she who is the heroine of that delectable comedy on canvas, *Las Meninas*, and softens our feelings of disgust at the dwarfs and deformities whom even the art of Velasquez can hardly render bearable objects of interest. The earliest of these portraits is at Vienna, painted when the Princess can hardly have been more than about three years old. She is dressed in red, with silver trimmings, and stands beside a tiny table, on the edge of which her right hand rests, and on which is a glass vase of flowers. Both the tablecloth and the curtain at the back are blue, the latter being of a considerably darker shade. Señor Beruete says that this is "one of the most beautiful inspirations of Velasquez, and perhaps one that reveals better than any other his

also + very early  
of an early or  
in 1650







**PRINCESS MARGARITA MARIA**

**Louvre, Paris**





## The Infanta Margarita 39

powers as a colourist ; it is a flower, perfumed with every infantine grace."

Not long after this must have been painted the half-length in the Salon Carré at the Louvre, in which the child is represented standing with her right hand resting on the seat of a full-sized chair, while in the left she holds a glove. Her dress, which is of white trimmed with black, is more formal, and the whole portrait lacks the extremely infantile simplicity of the earlier one. The painting of the hair is much more elaborate, and is indeed marvellous. Nothing could be worthier of its place among the selected glories of the French gallery, and M. de Wyzewa is not wildly extravagant in speaking of it in such terms as these : "The perfect chefs-d'œuvre collected in this glorious salon," he writes, "pale in the presence of this child portrait : not one of them can bear comparison with this simple yet powerful painting, which seems only to aim at external resemblance and without other effort to attain a mysterious beauty of form and colour."

Princess Margarita next appears at the age of six or seven, again at full length, in the picture at Frankfort, in the Städel Museum ; a replica of this is at Vienna. She is dressed in greyish white with black trimmings ; her arms are extended straight out on either side of her so as to allow her hands to rest



on the edge of her jacket, which falls like a tablecloth on the top of the enormous hoop-skirt.

About the next portrait of Margarita there is some doubt, but the better opinion seems to be that the fascinating full-length of her in an enormously wide hoop at the Prado, numbered 1192 (formerly 1084), is not, as still stated in the catalogue, her half-sister, Maria-Theresa, afterwards Queen of France, but a veritable picture of herself, executed by Velasquez at the close of his life, and retouched about the face by Mazo after his father-in-law's death. Velasquez died in 1660, and in 1664 the Princess was betrothed to the Emperor Leopold. It has been surmised, therefore, by Professor Justi that this was the occasion for the portrait to be "brought up to date" by making the features of the Princess show her actually as she then was at the marriageable age of thirteen.

Six years after the birth of the charming Margarita, an heir was born who was christened, pathetically enough, Philip Prosper. He was only two years old when Velasquez was commanded to paint him, in 1659. His portrait was sent to Vienna with that of his sister. It is now in the gallery there, numbered 611. The poor little fellow died a couple of years later; he had none of the vigour of Balthasar



THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

**PRINCESS MARGARITA MARIA  
(THE INFANTA IN RED)**

The Prado, Madrid





Carlos, and as Señor Beruete points out, the vivacity in the face of the little dog, which is said to have belonged to the painter, is in marked contrast with the feeble expression of the unfortunate Prosper.

Of Philip himself we have two portraits during this last period. Neither is more than a head, but they are both of extreme value and interest in showing us the development alike of the feeble king and the masterful painter. The one at the Prado represents the king at the age of nearly fifty, and is probably a few years earlier in date than ours at the National Gallery.

Of the three mythological subjects painted by Velasquez in his last period—not to mention the *Apollo and Marsyas* and the *Venus and Adonis* which were destroyed in the fire of 1734—two are in the Prado, namely the *Mercury and Argus* and the *Mars*, while the third is now, despite the outcry of academical pedants, in the National Gallery in London. These subjects were painted for the decoration of the Torre de la Parada and the Salon des Glaces, and we may therefore suppose that, as in the case of the *Surrender of Breda*, the painter was not entirely free in his choice either of subject or treatment. What is worth noting, however, is that in the *Mars* he is evidently more at ease with himself than



with the *Venus*. Among other objections that have been taken to the authenticity of the latter is the idea that technical difficulties have been evaded in the pose of the model. No such objection can be taken in the case of the *Mars*, or any other study of the male figure, and it would seem that, whether from temperamental or religious feeling, Velasquez avoided painting subjects like the *Venus*, and when he was obliged to do so, posed his model so as to offer as little offence as possible either to the spectator or to himself.

In view of the scepticism with which this picture was received by some of those authorities in whom the public ought to have every confidence, I will quote the substance of Señor Beruete's remarks upon the authenticity of it. "It has the distinction," he says, "of being the only nude female figure in the whole of the work of Velasquez, and it is still more surprising that such an example should exist, having regard to the reprobation excited in Spain by this sort of painting where not only moralists but even art critics condemned it. At the Court, under the influence perhaps of the Bacchantes, the Venuses, and the Graces of Titian and Rubens, there certainly reigned a certain tolerance for this sort of subject: that explains how it was that Velasquez executed a certain



**VENUS WITH THE MIRROR**

National Gallery, London







number of them, at all events a *Venus and Adonis* which has disappeared, and this *Venus at the Mirror*.

"We have already said that this picture formed part of the decoration of the Salon des Glaces at the Alcazar before the fire in 1734. It escaped disaster, and Ponz saw it at the house of the Duke of Alba. Thence it passed to the favourite of Charles IV, Prince de la Paix, whose property was confiscated. It was sold in London in 1813, and acquired on the advice of Sir Thomas Lawrence by Mr. Morritt, whose descendants have accorded it a place of honour in the gallery at Rokeby Park, near Barnard Castle.

"The authenticity of the work has found numerous doubters in Spain, less on account of its subject than because so few people ever suspected its existence; but after it was exhibited at Manchester in 1857, and in London in 1890, it was recognized that its attribution to Velasquez was well founded.

"At the sight of the canvas all doubt vanishes. There, indeed, is the style, the inimitable technique of Velasquez."

With the seven portraits of dwarfs and actors belonging to this last period may be ranked three of somewhat earlier date. The first is *The Geographer*, in the gallery at Rouen, the second an actor called

Pablillos de Valladolid, and the third a dwarf known as El Primo, which was painted at Fraga in 1644.

The picture of *Pablillos* is remarkable as being the only portrait in which Velasquez attempted to depict action. That the result is entirely successful it is almost superfluous to say, though it must be allowed that the action is not very violent, and the pose is one which the model would have no difficulty in maintaining for any length of time. He stands with his feet wide apart—the left slightly advanced—the left hand holding his cloak, which has been thrown back over the shoulder, and the right hand extended with a backward and downward movement of the arm. He is dressed in black, with a white linen ruff, and the figure is silhouetted against a background of grey so absolutely plain as not even to show the junction of the floor with the wall.

In striking contrast to this simple and rather sombre picture is the portrait in rose-colour and black of a less attractive member of the household, nick-named Don John of Austria. There is nothing pathetic about Pablillos, who gives the impression of having been a capable actor; but with Don John we seem to be approaching the quarters occupied by the deformities and monstrosities who shared with Velasquez the honour of being employed in the royal household. Besides

treacherous  
of Spain

## The Buffoons and Dwarfs 45

a sinister countenance and very rickety legs, there is nothing physically repulsive about Don John ; but his very name—that of the natural son of the Emperor Charles V, the hero of Lepanto—and the *apparat* of armour, cannon balls, and a burning ship in the background, denote that he is a figure of fun rather than of pity. This picture, which appears to have been one of the last painted by Velasquez, is technically one of the most interesting of all his works. “In the whole of the master’s work,” says Señor Beruete, “there is not a single canvas of which the technique is more simple ; having drawn the outline of this picturesque character with precision, he touched it lightly with colour, thickening only that on the head and the hands. There is such ease and suppleness of execution, such delicacy of tone, that one would think it was a water-colour rather than an oil-painting.” So transparent, indeed, is the pigment—which must have been floated on quite wet—that the lines of the chequered paving can actually be seen through the cuirass which was introduced afterwards as an accessory.

Of the five dwarfs whom Velasquez has immortalized it is difficult to say more than that they are horribly life-like. As in the case of every picture that he painted, he has accomplished a marvel of truth



and force, and conveyed an impression of the model before him which one can never help feeling is stronger than would have been conveyed to the ordinary beholder by the model himself. To many, if not most of us nowadays, the sight of physical deformity is so repulsive that it is only when it is not thrust upon us that we can pity it. Velasquez, however, neither invites our pity nor merits our displeasure in showing us these unfortunate creatures. To him they were as familiar objects about the Court as the members of the Royal Family themselves, and the painting of their portraits as much in the ordinary course of his employment. That they show us afresh, from a different point of view, that his power of truthful and forceful painting was unaffected by any considerations of whom or what he was painting is enough to redeem them from the censure of any who think that only beautiful things are to be painted.

The two whole-length standing figures, labelled *Æsop* and *Menippus* respectively, belong to this period, and though exhibiting no physical deformities, may appropriately be classed with the group of eccentrics. They are obviously portraits, and though the models who stood for them present every indication of having been fetched in out of the street, the painter has invested them with such overpowering

accepted  
creativity

dignity that their filthy rags assume an artistic righteousness, and their plebeian features an air of intellectual force. The tall figure of Menippus, indeed, in his long black cloak and broad-brimmed hat, is curiously suggestive of the late Joseph Pulitzer, as has often been remarked. The broader and more robust Æsop, standing with his heavy, square, clean shaven face full towards us, holding a book under his right arm, is more like an Englishman of the eighteenth or nineteenth century, and save for the abnormal distance between the eyes the face is by no means an unpleasant one.

In these two pictures we have a return to the painter's earliest fancy of taking his models straight from life, as in the case of the water-carrier of Seville, the toppers, and the forge of Apollo. By this time he had learnt much more of his art, and the Æsop and Menippus are technically as fine as anything he ever did. But that such consummate skill should be employed in painting the portraits of a couple of beggars is really the most significant, and not, as it is often held, the most incomprehensible fact in the career of Velasquez.

If any doubt existed as to the overmastering desire of Velasquez to paint the simple actualities of life, it would be dispelled by the two crowning achievements



of his last years, *Las Hilanderas* and *Las Meninas*. We have seen how he began with *bodegones*, and how he went on to treat mythological subjects like the *Bacchus* and *The Forge of Vulcan* in terms of everyday life. We now find him relaxing himself, as it were, from the task of painting portraits for his royal master by turning again to subjects so purely incidental to the ordinary course of his life that we can only guess at the occasion on which they were undertaken, or the motive which prompted him to paint them. They are not heroic; they are not historic. They are neither poetical nor dramatic. In fact, they are nothing more, or less, than the full-blown flower of which we see the bud in *The Two Boys* and *The Water Carrier of Seville* at Apsley House.

On the other hand, it must not be forgotten that the very last picture that Velasquez painted was *S. Anthony Visiting S. Paul* and also that *The Coronation of the Virgin* belongs to the last six or seven years of his life. Neither of these beautiful compositions is in any way comparable with the actualistic pieces of which we have been speaking—except, it need hardly be said, in point of technical accomplishment—but in each case we find that the occasion explains the departure from the rule. *The Coronation of the Virgin* was painted for the Queen's

oratory, and must therefore be ranked with *The Lancers*, the *Mars*, and other pieces in which there were special circumstances to be considered. The *S. Anthony and S. Paul*, too, was designed for the Hermitage at Buen Retiro, and, as Señor Beruete observes, Velasquez doubtless was influenced by special reasons in his treatment of it. "He had passed nearly forty years of his life," he writes, "in the company of kings and the great personages; in his quality of painter to the King and Grand Marshal of the Court he had supervised the luxurious decoration of the royal residences and organized the magnificent fêtes at Buen Retiro, and at the very time when he was at work on this picture he was busied with his journey to Irun, where he had to make ready the royal apartments, and to the Isle of Pheasants, where he had to decorate the pavilion erected for the royal marriage and for the meeting between Philip IV and Louis XIV, whose Court was the most sumptuous in Europe. In the midst of so much pomp and grandeur he vegetated day after day, having to beg every moment for payment of his fees and engage in perpetual squabbles with the Court functionaries great and small. Is it surprising that under such provocation and at his age, being now in his declining years, Velasquez found in the episode

of the life of the first anchorite mentioned by S. Jerome in his Epistles a subject congenial to his state of mind and therefore made it his own? Can we doubt that he took more pleasure in representing the poor tunic of S. Paul than he ever experienced in painting the royal purple?"

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